



Connecticut Farm Bureau Association
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March 6, 2014

Testimony in support of: Raised Bill No. 5406 AN ACT AUTHORIZING BONDS OF THE STATE FOR COMMERCIAL RAIL FREIGHT LINE IMPROVEMENTS.

Submitted by: Henry N. Talmage, Executive Director, Connecticut Farm Bureau Association

The following testimony is submitted on behalf of the Connecticut Farm Bureau, a statewide nonprofit membership organization of over 5,000 families dedicated to farming and the future of Connecticut agriculture.

Senator LeBeau, Representative Perone and Members of the Commerce Committee:

The Connecticut Farm Bureau Association supports raised bill 5406 which would authorize the State Bond Commission to authorize bonds of up to \$30 million for projects that improve freight rail infrastructure. This is a significant increase over the \$7.5 million authorization in previous legislation. Connecticut farmers pay significantly higher costs for inputs like feed and fertilizer compared to their counterparts in other states. Part of the reason for higher inputs is that most products are trucked into the state. Upgrades and improvements of the freight rail system would allow for a higher percentage of agricultural inputs to be transported by rail at lower cost to our farmers. In addition, an improved freight rail system would relieve congestion on our already overburdened highway system. The future success of Connecticut business depends on a strong and reliable freight rail system, and we encourage adoption of raised bill 5406.